WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for automatically organizing electronic messages
    in a computer system, the method comprising:
5   receiving an electric message having a plurality of
    properties;
            storing the electronic message in a data store;
            automatically identifying a plurality of folders
    with which the electronic message is to be associated by
10 applying rules to the properties of the stored message;
    and,
            automatically generating a plurality of shortcuts to
    the stored message, each of the shortcuts comprising an
    element directly or indirectly identifying the stored
15 message and an element directly or indirectly identifying
    one of the plurality of folders.

2. A method according to claim 1 comprising storing the
    plurality of shortcuts as records in a database.
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3. A method according to claim 2 wherein at least one of the
    properties comprises a date and the rules include a rule
    which identifies one folder with which the message is to
    be associated based upon a comparison of the property's
25 date to a current date.

4. A method according to claim 3 comprising periodically and
    automatically generating new shortcuts, each of the new
    shortcuts associating the stored message with a folder
30 based upon a comparison of the property's date to a
    current date.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein the data store holds a
    plurality of messages and the method comprises receiving
35 from a user folder selection information identifying a

selected one of the plurality of folders, retrieving from the database a plurality of shortcuts associated with the selected folder, each of the shortcuts associated with a different one of the plurality of messages, and displaying a representation of the retrieved shortcuts on a display.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein each of the shortcuts comprises a SortKey value and retrieving from the database a plurality of shortcuts comprises retrieving the plurality of shortcuts in order of the SortKey values of the retrieved shortcuts.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein retrieving each of the plurality of groups from the database comprises sequentially retrieving shortcuts associated with the selected folder from the database in order of the SortKey value until either:
a) a last shortcut associated with the selected folder has been retrieved from the database; or,
b) at least a predetermined number of shortcuts has been retrieved from the database in a current group and the SortKey value for a most recently retrieved shortcut is different from the SortKey value for a second-most-recently retrieved shortcut.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the folders comprise a plurality of date folders each associated with a different period, the method comprising automatically generating a shortcut to the message in each of the plurality of date folders for which the time associated with the message is between the beginning and the end of the folder's period.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the date folders comprise a Today folder for which the period is a current day, a This Week folder for which the period is a current week, a

Yesterday folder for which the period is an immediately previous day and a Last Week folder for which the period is an immediately previous week.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the properties include a time and the method comprises identifying a period corresponding to the time associated with the message and creating a date folder associated with the identified period.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the record in the database has a length of 64 Bytes or less.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein the record in the database has a length of 32 Bytes or less.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein the record in the database has a length of 24 Bytes or less.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein the message has an attachment and the shortcut additionally comprises an AttachId value identifying the attachment.

15. The method of claim 24 wherein the attachment is stored in a data store and the AttachId value is an address of the attachment in the data store.

16. The method of claim 24 wherein the attachment is stored in a data store and the AttachId value is an address of an AttachmentSummary record in the database, wherein the AttachmentSummary record contains an address for the attachment in the data store.

17. The method of claim 24 comprising identifying a type of the attachment and automatically creating a shortcut to

the message in a folder corresponding to the type of attachment.

18. The method of claim 27 comprising automatically creating the folder corresponding to the type of attachment.

19. The method of claim 2 wherein the shortcuts comprise entries in a Shortcut table having a primary key comprising a plurality of ordered fields.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the primary key comprises MessageId + AttachId + FolderId, where AttachId is a field containing a value which associates the shortcut with an attachment to a message.

21. The method of claim 1 comprising, for a plurality of messages, identifying one or more addresses associated with the message and creating a shortcut to the message in a folder associated with each of the addresses.

22. The method of claim 21 comprising applying the rules of Figure 24A to each of the addresses.

23. The method of claim 1 comprising creating the shortcuts at least in folders associated with each of: a time associated with the message; a sender of the message; and a type of attachment associated with the message.